

As Editors See It

MR. BRYAN FIXES THE RESPONSIBILITY

Most of the democratic leaders and newspapers are so dazed over the avalanche that they cannot talk coherently. William Jennings Bryan is the first one to make an intelligent survey of the situation, and to fix the responsibility for the disaster. His statement has the merit of being clear and understandable. He places the blame on Woodrow Wilson, with James M. Cox as the contributing cause.

It is a most scathing indictment, and yet it is made with dignity and restraint. Mr. Bryan calls a spade by its right name and yet avoids abuse. Those dyed-in-the-wool democratic newspapers which are trying to get some consolation out of the situation by saying that the people were misled should read the Bryan statement with care, and while they are reading it they should keep in mind the fact that it comes from a member of their own party, a man who was thrice the democratic candidate for president and who was the secretary of state in the cabinet of President Wilson.

"The president," says Mr. Bryan, "attempted to drive out of public life every democrat who dared to differ with him even in minute details, while he made no effort to strengthen the democrats who made him the keeper of their conscience." Then he turns to the other side of the picture and tells how Mr. Wilson alienated republican support and invited partisan opposition by his appeal for a democratic congress that would support his personal leadership. The president blundered again when he stubbornly refused to accept the league with the few changes made by the senate. Thus he prevented ratification and thrust the league into the campaign as a partisan issue. "The people," declares the former secretary of state, "confronted with the choice between presidential infallibility and respect for the opinion of the majority of the senate, naturally chose the latter, and the democratic party, by indorsing the president's position, invited the defeat that has overtaken it."

It may be galling to the Wilson worshippers and it may displease Mr. Cox to be told that the democratic candidate aggravated the situation by "misrepresenting the position of the republican party on the league issue," but it is the truth and the truth must prevail. If ever defeat was invited it was by Mr. Wilson and the democratic managers. It is folly to rail at the overwhelming majority of the American people. They knew exactly what they were doing. The part of wisdom is to ascertain the cause and to profit by it. Mr. Bryan has attempted to do that, and he places the blame upon Mr. Wilson and the administration in Washington.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

BRYAN ON WILSONISM

William Jennings Bryan has repeatedly gone astray in deciding in advance the paramount issues of national elections. He has been guilty of rash speech in campaigns and often, while in the midst of public affairs, he has been deceived by his own idealism. Yet few men are shrewder in grasping the meaning of political sentiment after the event than Mr. Bryan. What he has to say, then, of the election results of last Tuesday bears the stamp of historical authority. We quote:

"The president laid the foundation for the disaster and Governor Cox completed the structure. The president tried to drive out of public life every democrat who dared to differ from him even in minute details, while he made no effort to strengthen the democrats who made him the keeper of their conscience."

Thus, from a source which can scarcely be disputed, is confirmed the opinion that the real issue of the campaign was Wilsonism. The questions over the covenant of the league of nations were of minor importance. Cox represented nothing in himself, being merely the echo of the voice in the White House. As democrats of independent mind were penalized for their independence and democrats of weaker will allowed themselves, even while protesting, to be driven into line, so their feelings were communicated to millions of democratic partisans who, on election day, voted to cast out Wilsonism even to the threatened destruction of their own party.

This final damnation of Wilsonism recalls the famous remark of the president, then a private

citizen, about knocking Mr. Bryan into a "cocked hat." Something of that sort was done at the Baltimore convention and again in maneuvering the Nebraskan into a hole while he was secretary of state. Yet it remained for Mr. Bryan to behold Wilson himself, his pride and his vanity, knocked into a "cocked hat" and to supply words for the obsequies.—Detroit Journal.

BRYAN AS AN ANALYST

Even Woodrow Wilson will not accuse William Jennings Bryan of Republican partisanship. Nor will the author of Article X charge the Nebraskan with membership in the "senatorial oligarchy." Yet the analysis of the causes of the slaughter of Mr. Wilson and his political ideas, Governor Cox and his methods of campaigning, are far more cutting than anything Republicans have urged in their calmer moments.

It was Bryan who made Wilson's great opportunity. The Commoner fought the battle for the inexperienced Wilson. He won it against terrific odds from other candidates and party field marshals. He fought as he had never fought for himself. He gave Wilson the chance to prosecute the ambitions of a lifetime. No one man could have been more willing to do for another than Bryan did for Wilson. This is sufficient to acquit him of prejudice.

Yet Mr. Bryan repeats what the Republican who opposed "the heart of the covenant" said against it. The Nebraskan puts it into keener words—words that bite and burn and must strike deeply into the obstinacy and autocratic egotism of the President. Bryan goes further in his assertion that Mr. Wilson was not only unreasonably stubborn in his stand for an impossible un-American condition, but attempted to drive out of public life every man of his own party who opposed even a detail of his opinion.

With it all Mr. Bryan was loyal enough Democrat to maintain complete silence during the campaign. He allowed himself to be misunderstood, misinterpreted, misrepresented, rather than say a word that might injure the prospects of Wilson's political heir. Opposed to Wilson's attitude and Cox's acceptance of a wrong position, Bryan kept his mouth closed rather than by speaking work injury to his party's candidate and opportunities.

Now that it is all over and the result what Bryan foretold in the San Francisco convention and even before that, he feels free to express an opinion on the combination of causes that produced the massacre of Wilsonism. And he is in no doubt. Mr. Wilson himself is responsible for the death of the league of nations and in particular his favored Article X. He disdained every suggestion for reservation or amendment with the same stubborn autocracy with which he beat down every man of his own party who dared to hold a different judgment from his own. The Commoner is still the big man of his party.—Pittsburg Leader.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

For more than twenty years one man in America has been universally regarded as the possessor of greater power in the creating of public opinion than any other man in the nation. He has not always been able to win a majority of the people to his way of thinking, but all students of politics now agree that this man has been able to lead more men into the channels of his own political thought than any other one man the nation has known.

But if the voice of this man has been powerful, in other years, and it has been very powerful, that man's voice was never more powerful than the silence of that voice during the late campaign. At the national Democratic convention, which was controlled absolutely by the Wilson administration, no effort was spared to humiliate and even to spit upon William J. Bryan. His every proposal for platform planks was hooted. His every plea to the conscience of the delegates was laughed down. His suggestions for the putting of a few gems of pure Americanism into that part of the platform which dealt with the league of nations was regarded as a covert thrust at the one man who claimed the right to sit in the presidential chair and direct the doings of the Democratic party as certainly as a Missourian directs the movements of his

own mule. But the shameful convention adjourned at last, having worked the will of Wilson in the making of a platform, and having perfected the plans of a corrupt combination of political crooks in the selection of a candidate.

The voice of Bryan was heard in the national convention. He pleaded with the delegates to save the dear old Democratic party from the defeat which must follow servile fawning at the feet of an autocrat in the White House, and the willing surrender of the nomination to a candidate practically manufactured for the occasion by an element which had been as strange to a pure principle of democracy as an eagle is strange to the haunts of an owl.

But when the shameful convention was at an end the voice of that wonderful pleader for the cause of peace among the nations of the earth, and for purity in the politics of our own nation, was as silent as the grave. Soon following the convention the successful combination which had controlled its deliberations and its nominations began to discover that the silence of the Bryan voice was as dangerous as its activity in other years. And then it was that the leaders of the Cox campaign began pleading with the owner of that mighty voice to coin just one sentence favorable to the Democratic candidate for president. Even the haughty atmosphere of the White House was subdued, and from that abode of royalty the whisper went forth that if only the voice of Bryan might be induced to join the voices of Wilson and Cox in favor of the Democratic nominee, the Bryan voice would be gladly hailed and acknowledged as part and parcel of the trinity of voices thus sought to be launched in behalf of the machine platform and the machine candidate of the Democratic party.

At this moment I believe I may say, and without offense to the proprieties, that the big fellows in charge of the Cox campaign went to the length of sending special envoys from Washington to Nebraska, to request some persons who were regarded as personally dear and politically near to Mr. Bryan, to journey to Florida and there induce the great Commoner to speak just one word in behalf of Cox. Did any real friend of Mr. Bryan and Nebraska hearken to the voices of the tempters? Did they journey to Miami or elsewhere on such a mission? Not yet.

And as the campaign progressed the silence of the Bryan voice became oppressive to the Cox managers. They were not only personally oppressed but they could not fail to discover that the silence of the Bryan voice was choking all the chances of success which Cox ever had as certainly as the silent hugging of a serpent crushes the life out of the body of a rabbit in its coils.

But now that the campaign is over—now that every prophecy made by Bryan at San Francisco has been fulfilled—now that the dear old Democratic party, in whose cause this same Bryan has given so freely of his life, lies bruised and bleeding, stricken down by the enemies of its principles beneath the roof of its own house, the long silence of the Bryan voice has been broken, and it is speaking again to the conscience of the country, and to the shame of those base elements which sacrificed the dear old party of Jefferson and Jackson upon an altar reared to the gods of personal ambition and aggregated greed at San Francisco.

Listen to the words of that wonderful voice—words spoken on the day following the great slaughter of last Tuesday.

I commended the silence of the wonderful Bryan voice during the late unhappy campaign. I commend the words of that wonderful voice in these days of Democratic degeneracy. And while I shall always be found in harmony with those who desire that our own beloved nation shall do a fair part in uniting with the nations of the world in promoting peace among the nations of the earth—even so I shall believe with Bryan that our America must not and shall not "surrender to any foreign group of nations the right to determine when our America shall declare war."—Edgar Howard, in Columbus, Neo., Telegram.

RESULT CERTAIN

We haven't a single tear to shed over the result of Tuesday's election. The result was certain. The staging was set at San Francisco. The results of that convention out there, only bore its fruit last Tuesday. The Democrat party was put upon the auction block and sold. The Murphys, Taggarts, Sullivans, and Edwards bought